



## EUROPEAN UNION

### OSCE Permanent Council Nr 1044 Vienna, 12 March 2015

---

#### EU statement on the occasion of International Women's Day

---

2015 marks a particularly important year for women's rights and gender equality. As we celebrate 40 years since the first world conference on the status of women (Mexico 1975), 20 years since the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and 15 years since resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security we note advancements made and highlight gaps in many areas requiring political will and resources.

The EU remains at the forefront on promoting gender equality. Progress on women's rights is progress on human rights and it leads to smart politics and economics. Societies prosper when women are given an equal chance to participate freely in political, social and economic life. Therefore, we must ensure that women's rights and lives do not depend on arbitrary decisions, lack of access to justice or biased governance institutions. Combating all forms of violence against women and girls remains a crucial endeavour. When discussing women's rights and gender equality, the role of men and boys must not be underestimated.

In the OSCE we look forward to meaningful discussions on an Addendum to the Action Plan for the Promotion of Gender Equality, as tasked by the Basel Ministerial Council. Additionally, we underline the importance of implementation of the Ministerial Council Decision on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women, and other OSCE commitments on these issues. We also wish to highlight the importance of implementing UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security and we support continued discussions on the development of an OSCE-Wide Action Plan on the implementation of UNSCR 1325. Preventing sexual violence in conflict is another important area where the OSCE should be more engaged.

The International Women's Day provides a good reminder to all of us of the work which remains to be done in promoting and advancing gender equality. The EU will

continue steadfast in its endeavours to place gender equality, human rights and empowerment of women and girls at the forefront of the global agenda.

The Candidate Countries the FORMER YUGOSLAV REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA\*, MONTENEGRO\* and ALBANIA\*, the Country of the Stabilisation and Association Process and Potential Candidate BOSNIA and HERZEGOVINA, as well as UKRAINE, the REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA, GEORGIA, ANDORRA, MONACO and SAN MARINO align themselves with this statement.

\* The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro and Albania continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.